

Sam Houston State University
A Member of The Texas State University System

Integrated Marketing Communication Policy IMC-03 Social Media Policy

1. **Purpose of policy:** Sam Houston State University is committed to having a strong social media presence. As such, it is important to ensure that all university social media accounts, content, communication, and engagement is effective, strategic, and legal.
2. **Scope of policy:** This policy is applicable to all University Social Media Accounts (USMA) and their respective administrators.
 - a. A University Social Media Account is defined as any social media profile, page, account, or community that is operated and administered by SHSU or an SHSU academic or administrative unit. This includes sponsored alumni groups and recognized student organizations. Official University Social Media Accounts are listed on the [SHSU Social Media Directory](#).
 - b. Social media is defined as any websites or applications that enable users to create and share content (information, ideas, personal messages, photos, or videos) or to participate in social networking and microblogging. Examples include, but are not limited to, Facebook, X, Instagram, Threads, LinkedIn, YouTube, Snapchat, and other similar platforms or applications.
3. **Account Compliance:** University Social Media Accounts and their administrators must comply with state and federal law, agency regulations, university policies, IMC guidelines, and platform terms of service, including but not limited to [FERPA](#), HIPAA, NCAA Regulations, and Non-Discrimination Policies.
 - a. Privacy Laws. Only public information may be posted on university social media accounts. Personally identifiable information, sensitive personal information and any other information protected by law should be excluded unless a person has provided, in writing, permission to use personally identifiable information to the USMA administrator. Please refer to the [Texas Department of Information Resources Social Media Guidelines](#) and [The Family Education Rights and Privacy Act](#).
 - b. [NCAA Regulations](#). Sam Houston State University employees and affiliates are required to follow NCAA regulations when communicating on social media. Under no circumstance should an employee or university social media account interact with prospective student-athletes.
 - c. Copyright and Attribution. University Social Media Accounts are expected to adhere to all applicable laws and protections associated with copyright. For more information regarding individual rights and content ownership, refer to the [Digital Millennium Copyright Act](#).
 - d. Platform Policies. University social media accounts are subject to the terms of service of the applicable social media platform. It is the responsibility of the account administrators to stay up to date with the platform's terms of service.
4. **Account Governance:** All social media accounts created on behalf of Sam Houston State University are the sole property of the institution. Creators and administrators of the accounts have no ownership rights.

- a. University social media accounts and published content in conflict with university policy, university strategic priorities, IMC guidelines, federal or state laws and regulations, or platform terms of service are subject to removal.
 - b. Deleting or Hiding Comments. As a state agency, SHSU is required by law to protect freedom of speech. As such, University social media accounts should not block users, delete or hide comments, or remove content without prior approval from IMC. Report social media concerns to the IMC Digital team.
 - c. IMC is responsible for selecting and managing all social media tools, systems, and processes. All creators and administrators must use the centralized tool provided by IMC to manage their social media accounts. The current social media management tool is Sprout Social.
5. **Personal and Unofficial Profiles:** Personal sites and unofficial social media profiles are not subject to this policy, however:
- a. Behaviors on personal sites are subject to rules and regulations listed in the [Student Code of Conduct](#) for students and the [TSUS Personnel Policy Handbook](#) for employees.
 - b. To maintain a clear delineation between university social media accounts and personal social media profiles of SHSU employees and/or students who identify themselves as being affiliated with the university, the use of the following disclaimer is recommended:
“The views expressed on my personal site are mine alone and do not reflect those of Sam Houston State University, the Texas State University System, the Board of Regents or the State of Texas.”
 - c. Only university social media accounts may use the university’s trademarked or copyrighted material.

Reviewed by: Jeff Harris, Chief Marketing Officer & Public Information Officer
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